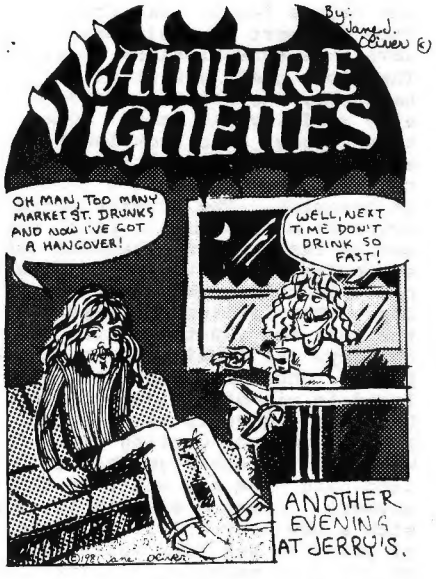
CEREBUS? "Cerebus really evolved out of my participation in two recent comics publishing companies in the last five years. Just around the time that ORB of Toronto went out of business, I was hired as senior editor. Although another issue didn't come out between the time that I joined and the time Jim Waley folded the operation, I was in on planning much of which would have appeared in ORB 7 (including "I'm God" which I wrote and which later appeared in STAR*REACH 7). To be in the office, watching the bank roll disappear and to follow up every lead on financial backing, and at the same time try to work on this next issue and plan the issues after it; well, it was a first-hand view of what it is like in the trenches when you're trying to make a living off a comic book. Although a little more removed from the scene, I was aware of the same problems with STAR*REACH when I was doing work for Mike Friedrich.

"For one thing, it set for me a very high priority on regular publication frequency. I realized how easy it was to drop from a bi-monthly to a quarterly to a thrice-yearly to a bi-yearly to an annual if that's how you solve your deadline problems. And to be honest, I wouldn't underestimate the frequency if I was asked to describe what makes CEREBUS popular. In a lot of ways, their publishing frequency is the only thing that keeps the fan spotlight on Marvel and DC. . . . Deni and I both found it very encouraging that there are so many other folks publishing comics right now. I share your enthusiasm for the "new wave" concept of self-publishing. It seems a little like selling pictures of yourself on a street corner at first, but it beats working eight hours a day with an editor strapped to your shoulders. To me, anyway." -DAVE SIM 6-80

Jim Ryan has his mini out. It's PARANOIA PSYCHOMIX. 50¢ and stamp from him at 102 S. Lake Ave, Albany, N Y 12208. The cover hand-colored for $2.* Dan Taylor has BOOK OF ART 6 and 7 out. 50¢ each. 1833 N Guntle Rd., New Lebanon, OH 45345.* BAY CON July 26-7 at USF.* A xeroxed collection of SALLY THE SLEUTH. $5 from Photo Talents, P. O. Box 1195, G. P. O., Evanston, ILL 60204.* Shelton & Hunt Emerson interviewed in COMICS FEATURE 3. Shelton is blasé and optimistic. Hunt thinks WWIII is upon us. Cheer up, Hunt. -Clay Geerdes

COMIX WORLD 150. July 1, 1980. © Clay Geerdes, Box 7081, Berkeley 94707. All Rights Reserved. Logo by Dave Sim. Subs: $10 for 48. Mini-comix. Latest set of 12 for $5. 12 issues of BABYFAT for $5. The newest mini is Jane Oliver's VAMPIRE VIGNETTES. 50¢ and a stamp from CW. Below are a couple of panels from AUTO BE RECYCLED, the ug that shows you how to beat the used car business. Center are some preview hits from Bobbo Armstrong's third MICKEY RAT. Best ug comic in a long time.* TALES TOO TOUGH FOR T-V 3 is $1.25 from Jamie Alder, 9970 Liberty Road, Chelsea, MI 48118. Art by Newave artists like John Valandingham, Brad Foster, Doug Bryson, Valentino, et al.



COMIX-TALK

ON SUBSCRIBING TO UNDERGROUNDS: My advice is Don't subscribe. Why not? 1) Underground artists do not have the administrative machinery to process and handle regular subscriptions. 2) The comix are not regularly produced. One issue may come out, then the next one may not appear for years. By the time the second one does come out, the artist may have lost his files (through moving, whatever), hence subscribers are shit out of luck. 3) Most of the artists are not good businessfolks. They don't answer their mail regularly and they are not going to worry about your complaints.

Here's what usually happens. An artist and a few friends get together and come out with a comic. They're all tight buddies at the time and they think this will continue. They say they'll keep on doing these funnybooks and sell them and make big bucks and become famous like Crumb. They use part of their mag to advertise subscriptions to it. They love their own stuff and naturally they assume everyone else will love it, too. Some time passes. The book isn't selling that well. A lot of cases are sitting in the garage or basement. The printer wants twice as much money to print the second issue and the handful of subscriptions that came in barely paid for this week's beer and dope. The landlord is raising the rent for the third time and the guys are looking for a cheaper place. Cheaper places are only found in rip-off neighborhoods. One of the guys is heavy into alcohol and not getting his work out. Another guy has gotten into hard dope and can't be trusted anymore. Someone else is in love with a new lady and is thinking of going to New York and trying to get into magazine illustration. After a lot of hassles and shitwork, maybe the second issue comes out. All this time, the artists are not making a living. They have to do what ad gigs they can get and work at part-time jobs as well. Their attention becomes divided. Those who really love art keep on drawing, but the others for whom it is a peripheral activity soon drop it and get more serious about computer programming or some other line of work. Time passes.

Meanwhile, the subscribers wonder what happened to their money. When will WHATSITSNAME 2 be out? It's been nearly two years. I got burned. Well, sure you did. It's not like you were subscribing to PLAYBOY or some mag that has the machinery to handle regular mailing. You bought into an unstable and tentative trip and when you did it was partly your daydream that it would last. So what can you do? I'd say wait and see if the comic book does attain regular continuity. When you see a book come out regularly, you know someone there is taking care of business and you may want to risk a subscription.

Well, say the artists, what is this shit? We have to get subscriptions to our first issue so we can come out with the second. What is Geerdes saying here? He's saying that's not the way to finance your trip and it is the way to ruin your reputation and credibility with lots of readers who might be your fans in the future. If you've got six issues laid out and the financial backing to print and distribute and mail them, then you have the right to solicit subscriptions for those six and no more. You don't have the right to ask people to buy into your fantasies of possible success. If you are going to make subscription promises, you should have an office and a secretary set up to handle that end of the business. If you haven't; if you take subs and just pocket the bread and don't deliver, then you get a rep as a rip-off and you deserve it.

In the fanzine business, this is no different. How many zines have come and gone in the past decade? How many subscribers have gotten a couple of copies and never seen another? What subscriber has ever gotten a refund? How many times have readers been ignored when they complained about not receiving a copy? Well, the publisher is no more responsible for mail lost than the reader is, but he must take that responsibility if he wants to continue in the business.

I advise my readers to buy their comix from reputable dealers like Last Gasp, Comics and Comix, Bob Sidebottom, companies that deliver the goods. If you buy from an individual, you are always gambling the first time. Me, too. I will give someone that first dollar or two if I want what he has, but one burn is it for me. I keep a file of complaints on burns and I never deal with the person or company again, nor do I accept advertising from that person or company in my newsletter. When someone advertises a mini-book or other item in COMIX WORLD, I expect them to process their orders right away and give my readers the same quick service I give them. The rule is not to advertise until you've got your trip organized.

And, no, I don't agree with the practice of advertising books in advance, particularly books that may not get into print for many months. All this does is create bad faith among the readership. When you read about a particular title and see it previewed in COMIX WORLD, that book is out and available and you should get a copy within ten days if you order it from a recommended dealer. I always make it clear that a book is out and I'm going to say very little about something I haven't seen personally. I used to write a lot about books in the planning stages, but I found this doesn't work out well. Many of them were just daydreams that went undrawn like VELVET VICE or unpublished like YER MAMA.

— clay 6-80.